



MEMO



N O R T H C A R O L I N A D I V I S I O N O F
E M E R G E N C Y M A N A G E M E N T

Director's Comment — Doug Hoell, N.C. Div Emergency Management



Are you ready?

All of us in Emergency Management know that September is the peak of hurricane season. That's when Hurricanes Frances, Ivan, Floyd, Fran and Hugo all struck causing widespread devastation for large regions of our state.

Gov. Bev Perdue has proclaimed September as Emergency Preparedness Month to encourage families, businesses and schools to take steps to prepare themselves for hurricanes, as well as all

types of emergencies. I encourage you to be sure your family is ready, too.

We preach to others year round that every family should have an emergency plan for what to do and where to go if they should need to evacuate their home. Families should take time to assemble or update an emergency kit with extra food, water, clothing, medications and important documents. We know first hand that the easiest, most cost-effective thing one can do to protect one's family is to plan ahead, gather those supplies and discuss those emergency plans. After all, if we each take responsibility to be prepared at home for those disruptions, then emergency crews can focus on helping those who are in life-threatening situations.

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So, I ask you, are you practicing what you preach? Are your plans and kits ready?

Sometimes it is too easy to overlook our own preparedness needs as we concentrate on the needs others.

By now, each county should have a copy of the "Be Prepared, Be Safe" video that talks about the importance of emergency preparedness. If not, you can see it on our department's web site or on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9EHir7Gp74&feature=player_embedded).

Take time to get ready now.

Doug Hoell.



(Above) Ernie Seneca, CCPS PAO, talks to reporters about preparations for Hurricane Earl. (Below) Gov. Perdue urges citizens to prepare for Hurricane Earl.



NCEM Prepares for September's Worst

Historically, September has been when the most destructive hurricanes choose to make landfall in North Carolina.

“Hurricane season began in June and we were ready then,” said Dough Hoell, North Carolina Division of Emergency Management Director. “Nevertheless, we are constantly working to improve our preparedness, response and recovery efforts. With the hard work of our staff and the cooperation of our local, state and federal partners, we feel we are ready for September’s worst.”

Emergency management officials have been improving the state’s capabilities throughout the year in anticipation of the next hurricane.

The division has strengthened its state disaster contract database to include more and additional vendors who can provide essential resources such as ice, water, food to the hardest hit areas in North Carolina. To get resources in the hand of the citizens quicker, the division has worked with local counties and community groups to strengthen the points of distribution plan. The POD plan enables essential supplies to be distributed to residents in need until the community infrastructure and local commerce is back in operation.. County emergency management officials and trained community volunteers set up a POD site based on the location and resource demands. The division also has established agreements with nonprofit agencies such as the North Carolina Baptist Men and has provided POD training to it members. These members will operate a POD site at the request of the county.

“Our POD program is expanding,” said Steve Sloan, NCEM assistant director of logistics. “We are getting excellent participation from local agencies wanting to volunteer and the counties are receptive to adding this response component to their existing plans.”

The division also has realigned the way it does business with local counties during an event, especially when requesting and monitoring resources. The Regional Coordination Centers now serves as the central point of contact for the counties during state emergency activations, as well as daily operations. Located at the branch offices in Conover, Butner and Kinston, the RCCs, validate all resource requests from their assigned counties. The RCC sends the request to Raleigh to be filled, fills the request with existing resources or denies the request for a particular reason. The RCC also monitors the resource tracking to ensure accurate information is given to counties when asked. The RCC will also be responsible for situational awareness, mission assignment and operational coordination duties.

“We made the RCC the primary point of contact to streamline the way counties talk to the state. With this change, every county question, inquiry and comment will be heard by the state and every attempt will be made to respond back without losing valuable time needed for the county to make a decision,” said Mike Sprayberry, NCEM deputy director.

Recent WebEOC enhancements will benefit all local, state and federal government agencies. Both the POD program and the RCC operations can be managed and operated through WebEOC. There is a POD tool on WebEOC POD I that will enable county officials to select and activate POD site. Officials can also calculate the POD requirements, create the delivery schedule for resources and increase better coordination efforts between county and state agencies. . This process is just a mere three steps in the new board. RCC activities are primarily operated through WebEOC

In addition, NCEM is working with the branch offices to create a database that provides incident management team information and new employee information for the county. This real-time database will contain points of contacts, critical infrastructure, demographics and resources; it can be modified by the county as needed without delay.

“The way emergency response is going, information flows through one central information management location. All local, state and federal agencies need to know exactly what is happening, be kept up-to-date and be able to immediately talk to each other during any emergency. WebEOC is that tool for the state and we are developing it more and more every chance we get,” said John Dorman, NCEM.

“While I hope North Carolina will be spared from any major hurricanes this September, I am confident that we are ready for them if they come,” said Hoell.

<i>Notable Direct Hit Hurricanes</i>	
<i>Date</i>	<i>Hurricane</i>
Sept. 27, 1958	Helene
Sept. 11, 1984	Diana
Sept. 1, 1993	Emily
Sept. 5, 1996	Fran
Sept. 15, 1999	Floyd
Sept. 18, 2003	Isabel
Sept. 14, 2005	Ophelia
Sept. 2, 2010	Earl

Granville County Making Schools Safer

Even before school started, school system administrators and emergency managers from Granville County were working together to make the county's schools safer.

Over the span of two days in early August, 37 principals, school administrators, county and state emergency management officials participated in a multi-hazard emergency planning course for schools. Originally developed by FEMA, the course was adopted and is administered by N.C. Emergency Management to give local agencies and organizations the knowledge, skills and tools necessary to develop effective plans for any type of school emergency.

The course taught the group how to identify and assemble school planning teams to recognize those hazards that present the highest risk to school operations and their resulting potential damage. Following the class, participants developed a comprehensive all-hazard emergency operation plan for the Granville County School System.

"The neighborhood landscape is growing at a rapid pace and more and more potential hazards are getting closer to our schools. Not only is it the school's responsibility to teach our kids about these hazards, but also to have plans how to protect them when danger happens," said Bill Chamberlain, NCEM Training Officer. "This course is important because it forces our school system leaders to identify those vulnerabilities for each school and then helps them to develop a realistic plan of action."

NCEM first offered the multi-hazard emergency planning course for schools five years ago following to help schools develop better plans to adequately respond to any emergency on campus. Since then, the division has taught the course more than 12 times to a total 220 school administrators, safety officers, principals and assistant principals.

Most of the state's major public school systems have had some level of participation in the multi-hazards plans for schools course. However, many have had difficulty implementing some of the core objectives due to lack of staff to implement the lessons or lack of interest from senior administrators.

Granville County was different. The superintendent, each school principal and all senior administrators in the Granville County Public School System, along with local law enforcement and emergency management, took the course. Twenty-three people originally were registered for the class, but 37 showed up.

Doug Logan, Granville County emergency management coordinator, lead the rallying cry months prior to the course and coordinated the attendance and participation of key school and emergency response officials. Logan knew everyone's participation was critical in order for the school system to develop a blueprint for a multi-hazard plan that would be compatible with local emergency response agencies.

"We needed this," said Logan. "Our children are our future and we have an obligation to make sure our schools and community knows what to do during emergencies. The course helps with that. I'm proud that Granville County chose to put the information to good use."

The group wasted no time. They implemented their first safety improvement the very next day.

"We realized one of our weaknesses was in communication. School staff were taking students outside to play with no way to communicate with the principal's office or local responders during an emergency," said Tim Farley, Granville County school superintendent. "So we purchased handheld radios and placed them in the hands of the appropriate people."

Farley added that although the purchase of radios was a small gesture, it made a significant difference in overcoming a weakness that was discovered through the discussions in the course.

The school system also is working with the county fire marshal and emergency management to visit schools and help the safety committees identify problem areas.

"I was amazed at the level of support and commitment Granville County demonstrated," said Chamberlain. "It is obvious their local officials understand how important school safety is."

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The superintendent will develop a county-wide multi-hazard school plan but he tasked each principal with forming a safety committee to develop a plan for their school that incorporates the school's unique vulnerabilities. Each school's plan will be added as an addendum to the county-wide plan.

All 19 Granville County public school principals and the superintendent, as well as leaders from Butner Public Safety, Creedmoor Police Department and Granville County 911 participated in the class. The class even had representatives from the Masonic Home for Children – a non-profit residential home that cares for disadvantaged and neglected children. NCEM's Central Branch Office Manager Joe Wright and Area Coordinator Dennis Hancock provided support for the class.

"This course was successful because Granville County leaders cared and it mattered to them," said Dennis Hancock, NCEM Area 9 Coordinator "The have emerged as a model in school safety planning for other school districts to follow."

To arrange for a Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools Course (G-362) for your community, call Bill Chamberlain, NCEM Training Officer at 919-715-9246 or bchamberlain@ncem.org.

National Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month, a nationwide initiative sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to encourage citizens to prepare for emergencies. Now in its seventh year of the campaign, FEMA has worked with Citizen's Corp and the Ad Council to deliver the preparedness message to all.

"Being prepared for emergencies needs to be a way of life for families, businesses and the community. North Carolinians need to seriously think about preparing themselves, their families and loved ones because many emergencies do not give forewarnings," said Doug Hoell, NCEM director.

Citizens can learn exactly how to prepare for the unexpected by visiting www.readync.org (www.listonc.org in Spanish). This one-stop website has information about planning for emergencies in North Carolina. Information for the deaf and hard of hearing also is available on the site. For more information on the national preparedness campaign, see www.ready.gov.

Enhancements and Modifications to WebEOC

The North Carolina Division of Emergency Management's Geospatial and Technology Management Section has made enhancements and modifications to NC SPARTA, more commonly known as WebEOC.

"The emergency management community will benefit from the changes by helping decision makers make quicker and better decisions during disasters" said Carla Woodlief, WebEOC Program Manager.

Three of the biggest changes users will notice are the preliminary damage assessment, map viewer enhancements and fuel supply monitoring boards.

County emergency management officials can now enter individual assistance and public assistance preliminary damage assessments into WebEOC. The tool will allow preliminary damage assessments to be collected in real-time and give state officials a better perspective on the total damage amounts following an emergency. It also will help them determine where exactly to start recovery efforts.

The map viewer enhancements allow users to view infrastructures such as fire and police stations, airports, bridges, dams, armories and others in multi-dimensional geographical information system maps. Users can view possible resources and the impact of emergency conditions on these infrastructures during emergencies.

The fuel supply monitoring board will allow WebEOC users to monitor and report up-to-date fuel availability in all above and below ground county fuel storage tanks. Sensors and gauges have been installed on the tanks and will feed data through the N.C. State Highway Patrol's microwave network to WebEOC servers.

The division is working with the Transportation Security Administration to incorporate daily incidents and airport status of the airports in North Carolina. TSA will enter and maintain the information in WebEOC and the data will be available in the situational intelligence map viewer.

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Other enhancements and modifications have been to resource manager, training module, work station view by role and county profile.

“We are working towards making WebEOC a better place for information management during an emergency to collect, share and store critical information. One major hurdle we are tackling now is the crashes WebEOC has experienced in past exercises. We are working to fix it,” said Woodlief.

Disaster-less Recovery Operation Leads NCEM Employee Overseas

Emergency management employees usually provide assistance by deploying local or state assets to help in the response and recovery operations or by coordinating goods and services for the disaster survivors. But for Robin Brown, one particular recovery operation called for a more hands-on approach.

In a round-a-bout way, it was the love of Irish music that led this Nash County native to Kenya to help build a children’s home and school. But listening to N.C. Emergency Management officer Robin Brown talk about her journey, it is clear that her strong faith and a little Hope are what really led her there.

In 2007, Brown noticed an Irish vocal group named the Celtic Tenors would be performing at NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount. As a self-professed lover of all things Irish, she jumped at



Typical living conditions in the slums of Nairobi.



Brown scheduled her breaks so she could play with kids from the orphanage in Kenya.

the chance to see the threesome perform. Her blogs about her experience at the concert caught the attention of one of the singers and they subsequently struck up an internet friendship. It was through James Nelson that Brown learned about Kenya Build, an Irish-based organization whose mission was to build group homes and schools for some of the country’s poorest children.

Brown became inspired by the group and their mission and shared her enthusiasm with her home congregation, Dortches Baptist Church. She began sponsoring a 9-year-old girl at Cheryl’s Children’s Home in Nairobi, Kenya giving \$600 annually to buy food, school supplies and some clothing for Maureen. Her mother followed suit, sponsoring 12-year-old Nancy, and their church voted to sponsor 7-year-old Churchill. In early 2008, Robin led a fund-raising drive at her church setting a lofty goal of \$1,000 for the 250-member congregation. She was stunned when they raised more than \$5,000 for the orphanage in six months.

The money from the church was combined with funds the singing group had raised and together they bought Cheryl’s Orphanage its very first form of transportation, a bus that could transport children daily out of the slums to the promise of security and education at Cheryl’s.

Robin thought she was done. “But the church would not let it go,” she explained, “they kept raising money throughout 2008 and 2009 and by the end of last year, we had raised an additional \$2,500.” (Not bad for a small congregation in a town of 800 people during the depths of a national recession.)

At James’ urging Brown planned a trip to Kenya as a member of the building team. Local builders were hired to begin the construction process and the Kenya Build team was tasked with finishing the work. During their 12 days there the group painted five new classrooms, an IT room and library and also finished roofing some of the new rooms.

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Robin quickly learned to schedule her breaks to coincide with the children's recess time so she could visit with Maureen, Churchill and their friends.

"Each child has a story and every child's story is tragic," said Brown. "Many have lost parents to AIDS, others have witnessed their families' murders during tribal wars, and some children were sold into prostitution as early as eight years old. Children have literally been thrown away."

Three-year-old Hope was found as a two-day old infant who had been shoved in a paper bag and tossed in the trash dump. Passersby heard her cries, rescued her and took her to another children's care center nearby. Robin has been following Hope's story from the beginning; Hope is now a healthy and happy resident at the orphanage.

But by American standards, even the relatively posh conditions at the orphanage are fairly dismal. Spartan dorm rooms house dozens of kids. Children have little room to play and their toys mostly consist of discarded trash such as water bottles and socks filled with dirt. Outside the orphanage walls, conditions are even worse. Open sewage flows through the streets and chickens and goats roam the alleys surviving by eating trash.

"The children are so happy and so excited with what they have, while we were wondering how they even function on a daily basis," explained Brown.

In many ways, the building trip resembled a recovery operation ...without the disaster. Brown said her background in criminal justice and emergency management prepared her for the harsh conditions and tragic stories that surrounded her during her time in Kenya.

"We went there to build a new facility and help improve their living conditions," Brown explained, "in much the same way that recovery teams here would help North Carolinians following a natural disaster."

For the Kenyan's though, there was no natural disaster. Much of the harsh daily conditions are the result of the political upheaval the country experienced in 2007.

"However, what I gained from those kids was much more than I gave. This trip totally altered my perspective and priorities," Brown said. "These children are the best testament to the resilience of the human spirit that I've ever witnessed. Knowing that they have overcome the conditions they have inspires me and serves as a daily reminder that I can overcome any challenge or disaster."

For more information about Kenya Build and Cheryl's Children's Home contact Robin at 919-733-3942 or visit www.cherylshome.org.



Robin Brown plays with Hope, a child who lives at the home and school orphanage.



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"In the Business of Saving Lives and Protecting Property"

The North Carolina Division of Emergency Management was formed in 1977 to coordinate the preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities of all agencies for emergency management within North Carolina. It performs this mission by planning, organizing, staffing, equipping, training, testing and activating emergency management programs during times of need.